MILTON S. EISENHOWER LIBRARY UNIVERSITY

THE TRUTH OF ANTI-SLAVERY HISTORY. 437

[Julian, George Washington]

THE TRUTH OF ANTI-SLAVERY HISTORY.

IN the article of Mr. Oliver Johnson, in the September number of this "Review," in reply to my paper for the month of June, he says I have created "astonishment among those who have hitherto thought themselves well-informed on the genesis of modern Abolitionism." He is not only astonished and evidently grieved at what I have said, but his entire article breathes an accusing spirit, as if I had laid profane hands upon the altar of Liberty, and defiled the garments of her anointed apostles. All this surprises me quite as much as my article seems to have surprised Mr. Johnson. Let me assure him that I am wholly unconscious of any sacrilege in what I have written. I did not say that "undeserved honor has been bestowed upon Benjamin Lundy and William Lloyd Garrison," nor have I sought "to pluck from the head of the great Liberator the crown of honor which has been placed there by the general suffrages of his contemporaries." Mr. Johnson draws on his imagination. I was personally acquainted with Mr. Garrison from the year 1851 till the end of his life. We kept up an occasional correspondence, and his letters bear witness to a personal friendship which it would be morally impossible for me to requite by the slightest intentional injustice or unkindness. I am, myself, a soldier in the army of his friends. As regards the doctrine of "immediate and unconditional emancipation," about which Mr. Johnson seems so singularly sensitive, I said in my article that I believed "it was the inevitable outcropping of his moral constitution, and came to him with the authority of a divine command," and that "he did not need to take it at second hand, while his overmastering personality popularized it, and imparted to it a meaning and power which quite naturally won for him the honor of its paternity." I believe this, in substance, is all that Mr. Johnson himself claims for Mr. Garrison, and, therefore, I am utterly unable to see why he should be either surprised or burdened in mind. I had no thought of robbing any leader of his laurels, and my sole purpose was to do fitting honor to an anti-slavery prophet who was born into the world nearly thirty years earlier than Mr. Garrison, whose anti-slavery record has been strangely slighted by history, and whose proclamation of immediate emancipation in 1814 cannot possibly dishonor or disparage the just claims of later pioneers of the cause. My single object was the service of the truth, and I feel confident that

CAGE
E441
.J86
438 1882

neither the letter nor spirit of my article betrays any other purpose to any fair-minded reader.

But let me come now to Mr. Johnson's analysis of the evidence I offered in support of my two propositions. The first of these is that Charles Osborn proclaimed the doctrine of immediate and unconditional emancipation in the year 1814. This is a matter of fact, and, like any other, may be proved by any legitimate evidence. It may be shown by the position and specific language of Mr. Osborn himself, recorded in brief and apt words. It may be proved by other language of equivalent import. It may be proved by Mr. Osborn's actions, speaking louder than any words. It may be shown by the records of the "Manumission Society," which he aided in founding, and which proclaimed the doctrine in question, if those records have been preserved. And it may be shown by the direct statements of well-informed and trustworthy men who were his contemporaries, and had knowledge of the fact. Any lawyer could have told Mr. Johnson all this, and thus have saved him from the error of assuming that no proof of Mr. Osborn's anti-slavery position is admissible except his own written or printed statement. This controversy is not about a sentiment, or a form of words, but a *fact;* and, with all due respect, I must decline to recognize Mr. Johnson's authority to reject legitimate evidence of it, or to dictate to me precisely how I shall demonstrate it.

My first witness is Rachel Davis, a daughter of Elihu Swain, at whose house the Tennessee Manumission Society was formed in the year 1814. According to an account of it given in Lundy's paper, subsequently published, it was in the month of August. She was present at its organization, in which Charles Osborn took the lead, and says that it avowed the principle of immediate emancipation. Mrs. Davis has long been personally known to me as an intelligent and trustworthy woman; but Mr. Johnson says "the constitution of the society is not put in evidence," and asks "why?" If he can find it, and will produce it, I shall be glad to offer it, and give him the opportunity to show by the record, if he can, that Mrs. Davis is mistaken. I presume the document is not in existence, but there are men still living, whose names I shall presently mention, who form a connecting link between that early period and the present, who know the character and purpose of these first manumission societies of Tennessee and North Carolina. From them I learn that their mission was not political, but moral. Slavery had not then found its way into

politics. Their appeal was to the individual. Benjamin Lundy, at a later day, urged political action against slavery, and believed that through this the evil could be finally abolished. His aim was the overthrow of the system. He thought the work could be greatly facilitated by judicious schemes of colonization. He believed in gradual emancipation, and was as fertile in methods of action as he was tireless in zeal. But Mr. Osborn's society addressed itself to the conscience of the slaveholder. Like the Garrisonian Abolitionists of a later day, it taught the sinfulness of slavery and the duty of manumission—not "gradual" manumission, but manumission at once, and without conditions, which was not then forbidden by law; and its business was to persuade slaveholders to enter upon this work.

But Mr. Johnson says "the uncertain recollection of an old lady" can have but little weight as a witness. He does not question her integrity, but says her "recollection of an event that took place nearly seventy years ago, and her comprehension of the question at issue now, may be doubted." He seems to forget that while the memory of old people touching recent events is very untrustworthy, it is vivid as to those of childhood and early life. I must also remind Mr. Johnson that in 1852, when Mrs. Davis was only fifty years old, she united with the Society of Anti-Slavery Friends, of which she was then a prominent member, in witness of the fact she now affirms. I do not pretend that my proposition would be established beyond all question by her uncorroborated statement; but I offer it as one of my proofs. Mr. Johnson cannot brush it aside by calling it "uncertain" or "doubtful," but must successfully impeach it, or accept as at least probably true the fact which it affirms. He is himself an old man. He tells us many things concerning the early career of Mr. Garrison which he very reasonably expects the public to receive on the strength of his testimony. He relates facts and incidents which date back a full half century, when he had scarcely passed out of his boyhood; but no one now thinks of questioning his statements by reason of his age and failing memory. It certainly would not have occurred to me, at any rate, that his facts could be successfully impeached on grounds so inconclusive.

I pass to my second witness, Rev. John Rankin, a native of Tennessee, where he resided till the year 1817. Few men are more widely known to the anti-slavery public. He founded the Western Tract Society, at Cincinnati, for the purpose of supplying the country with anti-slavery information. He was one of the first lecturers sent

out by the American Anti-Slavery Society. As preacher, writer and lecturer he was most honorably known. He was an uncompromising Abolitionist from his youth up, and he preached his doctrines boldly from the pulpit at a very early day, both in the South and in the North. He says the Manumission Society referred to proclaimed the doctrine of immediate emancipation, and that after his removal to Kentucky he proclaimed it to large congregations. In 1824, after his removal to Ohio, he published a series of letters setting forth the sinfulness of slave-holding, and avowing the same principle. These letters, he says, were published in book form in 1825, and Mr. Johnson tells us they were printed in the *Liberator*. That Mr. Garrison was well pleased with the book is shown by the following inscription on the fly-leaf of a volume of his own writings, which he presented to Mr. Rankin:

Rev. John Rankin, with the profound regards and loving veneration of his anti-slavery disciple and humble co-worker in the cause of emancipation, William Lloyd Garrison.

To this evidence of Mr. Rankin I now add that of his brother, Dr. A. T. Rankin, who has very recently made the public statement that John Rankin preached immediate and unconditional emancipation as early as the year 1817, and taught it in the letters referred to in 1824.

Mr. Johnson, however, seeks to discredit the testimony of Mr. Rankin by the same reference to age and uncertainty of knowledge which he makes to Mrs. Davis. He says "he is now ninety years old," and that "he may very easily be mistaken." He declares that "Mr. Rankin's anti-slavery life has been so long, so brave, and so uncompromising, that he may well be pardoned for not now recollecting that there was ever a time when he was not distinctively an advocate of immediate emancipation. The different periods of that life, with their varying lights and shades, are now, to his mind, so harmoniously blended together that he is hardly conscious that there was ever a time when his vision was not quite so clear on some points as it afterward became." This is admirable as a fancy sketch, and a left-handed compliment to Mr. Rankin; but what I have said of Mr. Johnson's criticism of the testimony of Mrs. Davis fully applies here, and I need not repeat it. It should be remembered, also, that Mr. Rankin's brother, who is a younger man, corroborates the evidence on which I rely, and that according to the first volume of Henry Wilson's "History of Slavery," page 178, at a meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society in New York, years ago, when Mr. Johnson would scarcely have questioned the accuracy of his memory, John Rankin made the

same statement respecting his early and public espousal of immediate emancipation which is now disputed.

But I do not rest the case here, and shall show the trustworthiness of Mr. Rankin's recollection by his letters already referred to, written in the year 1824, and published in book form the year following. As an arraignment of slavery this book is as terrible as it is just. He shows it to be a curse to both master and slave, a horrid conspiracy against marriage and the family, an outrage upon the inborn rights of man, a blight and a blast upon every community in which it exists, a loathsome mockery of the very principle of free government, and a palpable violation of the express law of God. The writer of such a book who religiously believed what he wrote, as did John Rankin, could never have tolerated the thought of postponing the duty of emancipation for a day or an hour. But putting aside the general character of the book, I propose to remove all doubt or cavil by particular extracts from its pages, and to show that Mr. Johnson is mistaken in saying "there is not from beginning to end a single passage which shows that he had in contemplation as desirable or possible any such thing as" immediate emancipation. I quote from page twenty-four of the third edition, printed at Newburyport, Massachusetts:

> And here I must remark upon one main objection to the emancipation of the slaves: it is that they are, in consequence of the want of information, incapacitated for freedom, and that it is necessary to detain them in bondage until they may be better prepared for liberation. But from the preceding remarks it is abundantly evident that they are now better prepared with respect to information for emancipation than they will be at any future period, and that less inconvenience and danger would attend their liberation at present than at any future time. It must be obvious to everyone capable of discernment that the inconvenience and danger of emancipation will increase in proportion as slaves become more numerous. Indeed, all the difficulties that attend emancipation are rapidly increasing, and they must certainly be endured at some period, sooner or later; for it is most absurd to imagine that such an immense body of people, most rapidly increasing, can always be detained in bondage, and, therefore, it is much better to endure those difficulties *now* than it will be when they shall have grown to the most enormous size.

I quote also the following on page one hundred and sixteen:

> We are commanded to do justly and love mercy, and this we ought to do without delay, and leave the consequences attending it to the control of Him who gave the command. We ought also to remember that no excuse for disobedience will avail anything when He shall call us to judgment.

If this does not clearly inculcate the duty of immediate emancipation, words have no meaning or were made to deceive. But Mr. Johnson says he has a copy of Mr. Rankin's letters before him, "and can testify from actual examination that no such phrase as immediate emancipation is contained in them." Indeed! Can Mr. Johnson

really be serious in thus belittling the dignity of controversy? His dispute with me is not about a watchword or a battle-cry, but the proclamation of a doctrine. I find no fault with what he calls "the terminology of the Garrisonians;" but the question we are debating is not a question of "terminology" at all, but of ideas. What did Charles Osborn and John Rankin teach on the subject of emancipation, and when did they proclaim it? That is the point to be determined, and not the particular phraseology which they employed to convey their meaning. The words immediate emancipation aptly express a particular idea, but they are not divinely inspired, nor the only words that will express it. The anti-slavery pioneers were left perfectly free to choose their own forms of speech. "Abolition without delay and without conditions" means "immediate and unconditional emancipation." The principle for which these words stand may be expressed in very many forms of speech. Would Mr. Johnson reject Osborn and Rankin as false prophets for not using the Garrisonian "terminology," and before Mr. Garrison had been heard of by the public? Shall they be

> "Without reprieve adjudged to death
> For want of well-pronouncing shibboleth"?

The entire reasonableness and credibility of Mr. Rankin's statement are made evident by some kindred facts, and I refer to them for the purpose of still further showing how completely mistaken Mr. Johnson is in assuming that nobody in this country announced the doctrine in question prior to Mr. Garrison, in 1829. In Lundy's *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, for December, 1825, I find a vigorous article, in which the principle is clearly asserted and argued. I do not find the name of the writer, because the article seems to be one of a series, and I have not been able to find the preceding and following issues of the paper, which would probably show the author's name. But he was evidently a man of thought, who knew how to express it. I quote the following passage:

> The slave has a *right* to his liberty—a right which it is a crime to withhold—let the consequences to the planters be what they may. If I have been deprived of my rightful inheritance, and the usurper, because he has long kept possession, asserts his right to the property of which he has defrauded me, are my just claims to it at all weakened by the boldness of his pretensions, or by the plea that restitution would impoverish or involve him in ruin? And to what inheritance or birthright can any mortal have pretensions so great (until forfeited by crime) as to liberty? What injustice and rapacity can be compared to that which defrauds a man of his best earthly inheritance, tears him from his dearest connections, and condemns him and his posterity to the degradation and misery of interminable slavery? * * * The cause of emancipation calls for something more decisive, more

efficient, than words. It calls upon the real friends of the poor degraded African to bind themselves by a solemn engagement, an irreversible vow, to participate no longer in the crime of keeping him in bondage.

This is a mere extract, but the purpose of the entire article is to show the duty and safety of immediate emancipation; and in proof of his position the author quotes sundry facts from Clarkson, on the subject of emancipation in the British Islands.

The same doctrine is declared, with still greater precision and emphasis, in an article published in the *Genius* for August 5, 1826. It bears evidence of having been written by a Presbyterian minister. After insisting that slavery is a crime, he says:

What has God told you about crime, or sin? To desist from it, or persevere? To desist. When? Now! Now!! Yes, mortal, he never gave man or angel a moment to consider—a minute to wait for the alteration of affairs, or for more favorable circumstances. If we are required to do right, we are required to do it immediately.

The subject of immediate emancipation is likewise discussed in the *Genius* for October, 1822, by Benjamin Lundy himself, in reply to a writer who has inveighed against the terrible consequences which would result from it, thus showing that the idea was then in the minds of men. Mr. Garrison, in all probability, read the articles to which I have referred at the time of their appearance, as he had read Rankin's book; and, if I were disposed to imitate Mr. Johnson's style of argument, I would insist that he must have borrowed his idea from them, or from Rankin or Osborn. I might urge that he was mistaken in saying to Mr. Johnson, in his later life, that when he adopted his battle-cry he was not aware that anyone else had used it, and that "his anti-slavery life had been so long, so brave, and so uncompromising, that he may well be pardoned for not remembering the fact." I might argue that "the different periods of that life, with their varying lights and shades, were to his mind so harmoniously blended together that he was hardly conscious that there was ever a time when his vision was not quite so clear on some points as it afterwards became," and that "the grandeur and intensity of his moral purpose, which was the same at all times and under every phase of opinion," made him "almost, of course, oblivious as to details." I will not apply this fanciful reasoning to Mr. Garrison, because it would be unjust both to him and Mr. Johnson, and because I think it unsafe to give a loose rein to the imagination in the conduct of an argument. My aim has been to vindicate the statements of Mr. Rankin, and this, I submit, I have perfectly accomplished.

Mr. Johnson next proceeds to notice the evidence of Mr. Osborn's

early and intimate associates and friends, which the reader of my article will remember. Of these witnesses I first referred to the well-known Levi Coffin, who in his published volume of "Reminiscences" states that Mr. Osborn proclaimed the doctrine of immediate emancipation, in Ohio, in 1816, and that he had espoused it in his early life. As a philanthropist Mr. Coffin is very widely known and worthily remembered. His devotion to humanity was a passion, while in the matter of integrity he was as guileless as a little child. He knew Mr. Osborn from his youth, and his statements are made positively, and from his personal knowledge. It will not do to say that his old age weakens the value of his testimony; for although he was an old man when he wrote his "Reminiscences," he had given the same evidence, as I have shown, in the year 1843, when in the prime of life, and only removed some twenty odd years from the time when Mr. Osborn's Manumission Society in Tennessee was formed. He is a competent and credible witness, and Mr. Johnson must impeach his evidence, or accept it as true.

My next evidence is the documentary statement of Daniel Puckett, Walter Edgerton, H. H. Way, Jacob Graves, John Shugart and Levi Coffin, published in the year 1843. I personally know all these to have been perfectly trustworthy witnesses and intelligent men, while three of them were intimately acquainted with Mr. Osborn and his anti-slavery position during his early life in Tennessee and North Carolina. They say the fact is "well known" that Mr. Osborn's position at that time was the same that it had been more than twenty-five years before. None of these men were then beyond the meridian of life, and their testimony must stand, unless it can be successfully assailed. How Mr. Johnson assails it we shall presently see.

I next proceed to notice the unanimous testimony of the Indiana Yearly Meeting of the Society of Anti-Slavery Friends, published in the form of a memorial, in 1852, in which the statement is positively made that Mr. Osborn preached the doctrine in question in 1814. This memorial, before it could be approved, had to be scrutinized by the several monthly and quarterly meetings, and the Meeting for Sufferings, and finally by the Yearly Meeting, which approved it *en masse*. The leading spirits in this society were William Beard, Henry H. Way, Enoch Macy, Levi Coffin, Jonathan Swayne, Thomas Frazier, Daniel Puckett, Isaah Osborn, William Hough, Walter Edgerton, Benjamin Stanton, John Shugart, Jacob Graves, and more than a score of others, many of whom were personally acquainted with Mr. Osborn's

position and labors in Tennessee and North Carolina. This statement, be it remembered, was made thirty years ago, and was not, therefore, the work of superannuated men. I know them to have been men of the highest character for integrity, and that nothing could have induced them to make a false statement respecting a matter within their knowledge. To discredit their testimony would be quite as unreasonable and ungracious as to question the concurring testimony of the eleven men who joined Mr. Garrison in the beginning of his great work respecting the material facts connected with his early career.

Now, how does Mr. Johnson dispose of all this evidence? Simply by styling it "the careless rhetoric of Levi Coffin and other associates of Mr. Osborn"! He says it is easy to see how, in their warm regard for their friend, and in their commendable desire to do full justice to his memory, they failed to make discriminations required by truth, and affirmed more than he ever claimed for himself." This is the legal logic of Oliver Johnson, who thinks I am "the victim of a credulity more amiable than discriminating or judicious," and that I have not "clearly understood the question at issue, or known just how to weigh the evidence in the case"! What does he mean by all this "careless rhetoric"? Does he not see that in discarding the whole body of evidence of Mr. Osborn's friends on the assumption that they were blinded to truth by their devotion to their leader he maks a precedent for setting aside all that has been said or written in glorification of Mr. Garrison by his friends and admirers? Does he not confuse and befog all the rules of evidence by which we can safely be guided in the search of the truth? Does he mean anything less than that the well-informed and conscientious friends of Mr. Osborn were, in fact, either knaves or lunatics? I fear the simple truth is—and I say it in all personal kindness—that Mr. Johnson has entered upon this controversy as the helpless victim of a foregone conclusion, and finds his way out of his dilemma so difficult and bewildering that he is obliged to set common sense at defiance. The judicial faculty seems to be wholly wanting. If our legal tribunals, sitting to hear and impartially decide questions of controverted fact, were to be guided by such loose and sentimental notions, the administration of justice would become a farce, and probably end in a tragedy.

Mr. Johnson, however, is not satisfied with his summary attempt to get rid of the testimony of Mr. Osborn's friends, for he goes on to argue that if the doctrine in question had been proclaimed at the time mentioned "it would not have failed to arrest public attention, and

throw a broad light over the whole country." When it was announced by Garrison, he says, "it was like a revolving light on a headland, casting its rays afar over the raging sea." He says "the whole land was startled into attention; the slaveholders were alarmed, and thenceforth had no peace," and that "it is morally certain that it would have been so in Tennessee if that light had been kindled there." Mr. Johnson's article is full of surprises, and this is not the least of them. I must again remind him that we are debating a question of fact, and, having conclusively shown that Mr. Osborn *did* proclaim this doctrine in 1814, the question about the consequences which he says would have followed concerns him quite as much as me. I might fairly leave him to wrestle with his imaginary consequences in his own way. But I will meet his argument directly, and expose its complete fallacy. This fallacy is found in the unwarranted assumption that public opinion in the South was as intolerant and inflammable in 1814 as it became in 1830 and the following years. This is notoriously not the fact, and it is marvelous that one so familiar with anti-slavery history as Mr. Johnson did not mention it. John Rankin writes me that while he was a young man a majority of the people of East Tennessee were Abolitionists, and that there was no law then forbidding emancipation; and I have already quoted his testimony that he afterward preached immediate emancipation to large congregations in Kentucky. His brother, A. T. Rankin, in a recent letter to me, confirms this testimony, and says that he frequently supplied a bookseller in Maysville, Kentucky, with copies of John Rankin's radical book already referred to, and that the State Abolition Society favored immediate emancipation. I have already quoted from articles in Lundy's *Genius* for 1825 and 1826 in favor of immediate emancipation, and I think no mob followed their publication. In 1826 the American Convention for the Abolition of Slavery was held in Baltimore, representing 81 societies, 71 of which were in the slave States.[1] In 1827 there were 130 abolition societies in the United States, of which 106 were in the slave-holding States, and only 4 in New England and New York. Of these societies, 8 were in Virginia, 11 in Maryland, 2 in Delaware, 2 in the District of Columbia, 8 in Kentucky, 25 in Tennessee, and 50 in North Carolina.[2] These societies were no doubt largely the result of the labors of such men as Charles Osborn and Benjamin Lundy. Anti-slavery feeling was widely diffused, and although it was not very

[1] Wilson's Rise and Fall of the Slave Power, page 170.
[2] Poole's Anti-Slavery Opinions before 1800, page 72.

intense, and the subject of slavery was discussed without passion, the people seemed to be honestly in search of some method of escape from its evils. These historic facts completely solve Mr. Johnson's riddle, and show why it was that from 1814 to 1830 the proclamation of immediate emancipation failed to startle the country. It was the Southampton Insurrection of Nat. Turner, in 1831, and indications of insurrections in other States the same year, which fired the Southern heart, swept these societies out of existence, and inaugurated "the reign of terror" in the South which lasted till its overthrow by the power of war. Then it was that Mr. Garrison's battle-cry was translated into a new dialect, and signalized the advent of the irrepressible conflict. Samuel Adams preached independence many years before it electrified the Colonies. He was the real Father of the Revolution; but he was obliged to bide his time till the multiplying exactions of the mother country finally prepared the people for the conflict, and to write on their banners that "Taxation without representation is tyranny." Nor does Mr. Johnson help his argument by his reference to George Fox and the "Inward Light." The central doctrine of Quakerism which this phrase expresses had been taught for centuries, and was borrowed from the New Testament. Fox simply coined a new name for it, and in an age of formalism and spiritual death gave it the stamp of a new revelation through the power of his singular personality and the impelling hunger of humanity for vital truth, which finally demanded satisfaction.

We are now prepared to deal with the final argument of Mr. Johnson, which he elaborates with great emphasis, and on which he seems to rely with much confidence. He says: "I challenge the production of a single line from the writings of Osborn between 1814 and 1830 in which he avowed the doctrine of immediate emancipation." He is still harping on his pet idea of a particular watchword; for he says I admit that Mr. Osborn "did not, in so many words," demand immediate emancipation, and that this "is tantamount to a confession that he did not demand it at all." I have already pointed out the fallacy of this notion, and shown that Mr. Osborn's position may be proved either by his acts or by the evidence of his early friends. If I have not already demonstrated by the latter that he avowed this doctrine in Tennessee, in 1814, then no fact can be established by human testimony; and, having done so, Mr. Johnson's surprise that he did not afterward affirm it, in express words, in his newspaper and Journal, is a matter of no practical significance. If it is incredible that Mr.

Osborn should believe in immediate emancipation in 1814, and not afterward avow it in his newspaper, it is equally incredible that he should all his life believe in gradual emancipation, and yet never once avow that. The negative fact on which Mr. Johnson raises a presumption against Mr. Osborn is thus met by the opposing negative fact on which I raise a presumption in his favor; for "I challenge the production of a single line from the writings of Osborn between 1814 and 1830 in which he avowed the doctrine of" gradual emancipation. In the language of Mr. Johnson, "the word never dropped from his pen, simply because the thought was never in his mind."

But I proceed to show that the *acts* of Mr. Osborn subsequent to 1814 harmonized with the testimony of his friends. When he removed to Mount Pleasant, Ohio, in 1816, and issued the prospectus of his newspaper, he found the colonization movement at its fever heat in that region. He had coöperated with his manumission movement in Tennessee till it lowered its standard by falling in with this scheme, which compelled his withdrawal, as I have heretofore shown by the testimony of his early friends; and now, in his new field of labor, where he found colonization the rage of the time and the only scheme of gradualism which commanded any attention, he entered upon his work. This subtle scheme of imposture and inhumanity became a national organization in the beginning of the year 1817, and became at once the great stalking-horse of slavery. But while it beguiled the great leaders of Abolitionism on both sides of the Atlantic, and subsequently enlisted both Garrison and Lundy in its service, Mr. Osborn opposed it from his early youth in Tennessee to the day of his death. He opposed it as a scheme of gradualism. He opposed it because it postponed the freedom of the slaves, and placed conditions in its way. While he never wrote or spoke a word in behalf of gradualism, he opposed, with all his might, this nefarious scheme which darkened the air, palsied the public conscience, and balked all efforts looking to immediate emancipation. He did not employ the particular phraseology of Garrison and Elizabeth Heyrick, which was then unknown as a shibboleth. The South had not yet been kindled into a blaze of excitement and rage. The hour was not yet ripe for any battle-cry, but waited on the slow and steady revolution of moral forces and the teaching of events. African colonization had draped over the abomination of slavery, and debauched the judgment of the country. Like Aaron's rod, it had swallowed up all else. It was the grand stumbling-block of philanthropy, and the colossal falsehood of the

generation. There was but one thing for a thoroughly earnest anti-slavery man to do, and that was to fight it. This Mr. Osborn did, single-handed and alone. Instead of shouting for immediate emancipation, "in so many words," he girded himself for battle against the most formidable and insidious foe of freedom that had ever stood in its path. He was a *doer* of the word from his youth, and I have a right to define his position by the unambiguous testimony of his life; and yet Mr. Johnson insists that he was a teacher of gradual emancipation! He seems to believe this, not on the strength of the evidence, but because of the overwhelming proof to the contrary. He loses himself in his metaphysics, and would try Mr. Osborn's anti-slavery orthodoxy by a catechism constructed more than thirty years after his death.

Before leaving this branch of my subject I must briefly refer to some minor statements of Mr. Johnson, by which he endeavors to strengthen or embellish his statement. He quotes from Mr. Osborn's Journal in 1840 his declaration that he did not "approve of Friends joining with other associations for the promotion of the great and good cause of abolition." For this Mr. Johnson calls him "a narrow sectarian." But it should be remembered that at this time his society was fully committed to the broadest anti-slavery principles. It had several years before expressly espoused the doctrine of immediate emancipation, and he undoubtedly believed it would be faithful to this testimony. He made the mistake in supposing his church would be an adequate organ of anti-slavery work for its members; but to his great surprise and sorrow he soon afterward discovered that Friends would neither coöperate with associations outside of their body nor work for the cause within it. He was thus obliged by his conscience and his fidelity to the slave to withstand the apostacy of his society and to coöperate with those who were not members. He loved humanity more than the peace and unity of a sect, and was degraded from his honored position as a member and persecuted by the ruling power because he was *not* "a narrow sectarian." He was faithful to the light as he saw it, taking no account of the consequences, and for this we should honor him.

Mr. Johnson quotes from Edgerton's "History of the Separation of Indiana Yearly Meeting" a statement that the New England Anti-Slavery Society in 1832, and the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833, "took an important step, quite in advance of any previous organization," and that while "all others had advocated a system of

gradual emancipation, these boldly took the ground that nothing short of immediate freedom to all could satisfy the demands of justice." But the context shows that Mr. Edgarton had reference to these particular societies in contradistinction to the colonization and other latter-day movements favoring gradual emancipation, in which Garrison and Lundy had joined. He had no reference, of course, to the manumission movement in 1814, for only a page or two before he had referred to it as favoring immediate emancipation, while he had united with the Society of Anti-Slavery Friends three years previous in a carefully prepared and thoroughly scrutinized document in witness of Mr. Osborn's position. His statement is most obviously to be interpreted in harmony with what he had deliberately written and repeated before, and not as its contradiction.

Mr. Johnson quotes my saying that Mr. Osborn's paper "was just such a newspaper as Elijah P. Lovejoy was murdered for publishing in Illinois," and says it could not, therefore, have been "an advocate of immediate emancipation, for the Alton *Observer* never took that ground." This seems a little disingenuous, though I acquit Mr. Johnson of any intentional unfairness. In making my statement, as he well knows, I was discussing the question of priority of Osborn's paper over that of Lundy, and directing the attention of the reader to the special fact that it was an anti-slavery paper in its character, which I proceeded to prove by extracts, having before shown Mr. Osborn's position on the question of immediate emancipation. Let me add, however, that Lovejoy *did* assert this principle, and declared that it was to be effected by the masters themselves, who were to be persuaded to it "exactly as a distiller is to be dissuaded from making intoxicating liquors." Mr. Garrison, himself, was not in favor of emancipation by force.

Mr. Johnson quotes from Mr. Osborn's Journal the statement that "about this time (1830) the slumbering babe of emancipation arose, and with manly purpose and Christian zeal began to plead the cause of the oppressed in a voice that was soon heard in all the land," etc. He argues that this shows that it was in 1830, and not in 1814, that this "slumbering babe arose," and "began to plead the cause of the oppressed." I submit that this is rather far-fetched, since Mr. Osborn does not say that the "babe" was *born* in 1830, but only that it had been sleeping—undoubtedly under the anodyne of colonization—and was then awakened, having been born in Tennessee sixteen years before. His meaning is evident from a passage in the Journal on the

page immediately preceding that from which Mr. Johnson quotes, and which he seems not to have noticed, which says "emancipation was thrown into the cradle of colonization, there to be rocked and kept quiet until the last slaveholder should become willing to send his human chattels to the colony." Why its voice was not sooner "heard in all the land" I have already explained.

Mr. Johnson says Osborn did not belong to the "Martyr Age" of Abolitionism, but to the dispensation of gradualism, which was "not a struggle, or a conflict, but a reform." But Mr. Garrison himself belonged to this dispensation till the latter part of the year 1829, while Mr. Johnson has admitted, in a letter to the Cincinnati *Gazette* published two or three years ago, that Osborn was an immediate emancipationist in 1830. The margin which thus divides these reformers is very narrow, on Mr. Johnson's own showing. In fact, Osborn holds the decided advantage, since it is not disputed that during his whole life he opposed African colonization, which so completely absorbed or superceded every other form of gradualism.

I now pass to the consideration of my second proposition, affirming that Mr. Osborn edited and published the first Abolition newspaper in this country. On this question it is needless to speak at any length. In my former paper I stated that the anti-slavery character of the *Philanthropist* is quite as clearly defined as Lundy's *Genius*, which succeeded it, or Birney's *Philanthropist*, published in Cincinnati in later years. I see nothing in Mr. Johnson's reply which calls for a reconsideration of this statement. He says Mr. Osborn's *Philanthropist* was not even an anti-slavery paper, in the sense that the *Genius of Universal Emancipation* and the *Liberator* were such. "These papers," he says, "were founded distinctly—it is hardly too much to say exclusively—to promote the abolition of slavery," and that "Osborn's paper was established for a variety of objects, of which the discussion of slavery was one, and that by no means paramount to the others." How Mr. Johnson has become so well informed about Mr. Osborn's paper I do not understand. I have gone over it carefully, and I repeat the statement heretofore made, that while he did not devote his columns *exclusively* to the question of slavery, it was "the burden and travail of his heart." As to Lundy's paper, I have in my possession a good many numbers of it, scattered through different years, and I have recently had the opportunity of looking through bound volumes of it beginning in 1825, and extending over nearly two years. It was very much such a paper in its makeup as that of Mr.

Osborn. In several numbers I notice a column headed "Temple of Muses" and "Ladies' Literary Cabinet." In others I find the heading, "Muses' Bower and Miscellaneous Department." I find "Anecdotes," "General Intelligence," and selected articles of topics other than slavery. There are moral and theological articles. In looking over the contents of the first volume, I find "Summary Statements," "Abridgments, etc., of Foreign and Domestic Intelligence," "Miscellaneous Articles," "Anecdotes," etc. There are articles on temperance, and peace, but I think scarcely so frequent as in the *Liberator*.

Mr. Johnson says "Osborn established and continued less than fourteen months a local, semi-religious, family paper, in which slavery was discussed in common with intemperance, war and other evils, and with no distinct purpose of creating a lasting and permanent impression." With about the same propriety he might have said all this of Lundy's paper. The *Philanthropist* was not a "local paper," but circulated in several States, North and South. It was in no sense a sectarian paper. It discussed slavery "in common with intemperance, war and other evils," but so did the *Liberator* and the *Genius*, as their columns will show, Mr. Johnson to the contrary notwithstanding. These papers were distinctively, but not exclusively, devoted to slavery, and the same is true of the *Philanthropist*.

Mr. Johnson says Osborn "was so lacking in breadth of view and tenacity of purpose that he abandoned his enterprise in a little more than a year." This is wholly unwarranted. He had sufficient "breadth of view" to battle for a great cause during a long life, and was never wanting in "tenacity of purpose." He gave up his paper because he preferred the wider field of the traveling ministry, which he had chosen as the work of his life, and in which he believed he could be more useful.

Mr. Johnson says "the paper was intellectually feeble, its testimony against slavery not a hairsbreadth beyond that of the Society of Friends, which, as everybody knows, stopped short of immediate emancipation." This is another random statement. Mr. Osborn's real vocation was not that of an editor, but a preacher, but the tone of his anti-slavery articles is sound and unequivocal, as shown by the extracts given in my former article. As regards the Society of Friends, it committed itself to the principle of immediate emancipation in 1837 and 1838, to which it became recreant when it turned its batteries upon Mr. Osborn for maintaining it.

Mr. Johnson says, "We learn from Mr. Lundy himself that his

torch was all ablaze before he ever heard of Osborn or his paper;" but he offers no proof of this statement. So far as I am able to learn, Lundy's first utterance on slavery was his "Appeal," a copy of which is now before me, published anonymously in 1816, being about two years after Osborn's movement in Tennessee. But the point made is not material to this discussion. His "torch" may have been "all ablaze" before this date, but the question I am debating is Osborn's precedence of Lundy in the publication of an anti-slavery newspaper, and Lundy is my witness that he began the publication of the *Genius* because Elisha Bates, to whom Osborn had sold the *Philanthropist*, lowered its anti-slavery character. This is stated in the life of Lundy, and also in substance in the first number of the *Genius*.

Mr. Johnson says that "Lundy's torch was so well lighted before he ever saw Osborn that it burned on after the fire of the latter had paled." This statement is unwarranted. We are not told when Lundy first saw Osborn, and cannot therefore tell how well his "torch" was then "lighted," while it is absolutely untrue that the "fire" of the latter ever "paled."

Mr. Johnson says there is every reason to believe that the editorial in the *Philanthropist* containing the words "Genius of Universal Emancipation," as quoted from Curran, was written by Lundy. This is mere unverified assertion. As I have heretofore stated, Lundy's contributions were written over some special signature, which distinguished them, while his Life, published in 1847, shows that Lundy left Ohio soon after his editorial engagement with Osborn, and was in Missouri, engrossed in his business affairs, when the editorial in question appeared in the second volume of the *Philanthropist*. I now admit, however, that I was mistaken in my conjecture that the name of his paper was suggested to Lundy by this editorial, having quite recently found an extract from the fourth number of the *Genius* from which it appears that the reading of Curran's speech, while quite young, made a powerful impression on his mind and led to the selection of the name of his paper. The point, however, is not at all vital in this controversy, which relates to the priority of Osborn over Lundy as an anti-slavery editor and publisher; and on this question I need only add that Lundy himself is my chief witness, as the reader of my former article will remember.

I have now responded to every passage in Mr. Johnson's paper which seems to invite either reply or comment, and I thank him for the occasion his argument has afforded me for more completely estab-

lishing the truth of my affirmations. I have written plainly, and with the directness and emphasis I am accustomed to employ in any serious discussion; but I think I have not been prompted by either passion or prejudice. I have not, as he supposes, sought to place any of the laurels of Lundy or Garrison upon Mr. Osborn's brow, or to pull down or build up the fame of any leader, but only to vindicate the truth of anti-slavery history, which is more to be prized than the glory of any man or party. Nothing, certainly, has been farther from my aim than to gratify any man's "family pride," or gain for him "a cheap notoriety." I did not personally know Mr. Osborn; and although he was a brave, sincere and conscientious man, I have never been in sympathy with his leadership in the doctrinal controversy which led to what I have always considered a needless division of the Society of Friends. I have therefore written without any personal bias. Mr. Johnson has evidently entered upon his task in a different frame of mind, though I do not doubt the sincerity of his endeavor to state the truth. I have long honored him as one of the bravest and most self-denying leaders and pioneers of a great cause; and if in the interest of truth I have pointed out what seems to me the waywardness of his argument, I have set it down entirely to the fervor and absoluteness of his devotion to his great chief. This has disturbed the just equipoise of his mind and prompted him to rush to the defense of a friend who has not, in fact, been attacked. Assuming that the historic position of Mr. Garrison is in some way antagonized by the claim I have made for Mr. Osborn, he has thus been led, unwittingly, to withhold from the latter the tribute of justice and fair-play which are rightfully his due. I hope I have made this so clear that Mr. Johnson himself will not fail to realize it, and I am sure, at all events, that the truth will be served by this discussion.

GEORGE W. JULIAN.